

Message

From: Giarmoleo, Julia [Giarmoleo.Julia@epa.gov]
Sent: 7/12/2021 9:59:55 PM
To: Segal, Alexis (Feinstein) [Alexis_Segal@feinstein.senate.gov]
Subject: RE: NOAA/EPA Joint Briefing with Sen. Feinstein Staff on Deep Ocean DDT Contamination off the Southern California Coast

Hi Alexis,

As always, thanks for your patience. At our last briefing with your office, we described EPA's initial review of Montrose Plant records relative to gaining an understanding of how DDT-containing waste from the plant was managed and disposed of in the deep ocean. Our evaluation of available records, including interviews and formal depositions, suggests that DDT-containing waste was removed in bulk from the plant via tanker trucks, transferred to holding tanks in barges at the docks, and deposited in the Pacific Ocean as bulk product, rather than in drums.

Since the briefing, we completed an additional analysis of plant historical aerial photographs from 1947-1972, to add to our understanding of whether the Montrose Plant had drums. Between a 1990s review of 49 photographs by experts in aerial photograph analysis at an EPA national lab in Las Vegas, and a current review of an additional 40 historic aerial photographs by EPA staff, EPA found no evidence of drum storage at the Montrose Plant. EPA will soon start to collect and evaluate the available regulatory history of Disposal Site #2 (primarily through records held by the LA Regional Water Quality Control Board) to determine the sources of waste disposed at the site. The information from these collective efforts will support future conversations among the multi-agency senior leaders' group and help inform the scope of a follow-up assessment of Disposal Site #2.

NOAA continues to identify available resources (ships, underwater scanning and sampling equipment) for this assessment, and EPA is completing project team staffing. In the coming weeks EPA will reach out to the multi-agency federal and state group to identify respective team members. The development of the assessment plan will follow, considering information from EPA's review of the operational and regulatory history of deep-ocean Disposal Site #2 and the questions the broader team decides the survey/sampling effort needs to answer. The assessment planning process needs to be systematic and thoughtful, to ensure the logistically challenging and expensive field effort gathers the most useful information.

Let me know if you have any questions!

Best,

Julia

From: Segal, Alexis (Feinstein) <Alexis_Segal@feinstein.senate.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, July 6, 2021 12:46 PM
To: Giarmoleo, Julia <Giarmoleo.Julia@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: NOAA/EPA Joint Briefing with Sen. Feinstein Staff on Deep Ocean DDT Contamination off the Southern California Coast

Thanks, Julia. I appreciate the update. If you could share more details re: the findings or conclusions, that would be helpful. Additionally, where is EPA in its record review re: dumpsite #2. My concern is, it's been a few months since the March mission, we have a good idea of what needs to happen next from scientists and this seems to still be in the preliminary planning stages.

From: Giarmoleo, Julia <Giarmoleo.Julia@epa.gov>

Sent: Thursday, July 1, 2021 4:51 PM

To: Segal, Alexis (Feinstein) <Alexis_Segal@feinstein.senate.gov>

Subject: RE: NOAA/EPA Joint Briefing with Sen. Feinstein Staff on Deep Ocean DDT Contamination off the Southern California Coast

Hi Alexis,

As you know, EPA met with the group of senior leaders from state and federal agencies on June 24th to discuss and refine proposed next steps. The discussion centered around: our work to investigate the operational and regulatory history of deep-ocean Disposal Site #2, including disposal of DDT-containing waste from Montrose Chemical Co.; determining the extent and nature of contamination at Disposal Site #2; evaluating the fate and potential transport of contaminants at Disposal Site #2; and the assessment of environmental trends in the Southern California Bight for potential impacts. We are assembling a team within EPA's Region 9 Superfund Division who will meet with staff and managers from participating agencies in the coming weeks to build out these next steps. The senior leader group will then reconvene to assess who can/should lead the work, and to identify possible funding options.

Feel free to give me a call if you have any questions!

Julia

From: Giarmoleo, Julia

Sent: Friday, June 25, 2021 3:35 PM

To: Segal, Alexis (Feinstein) <Alexis_Segal@feinstein.senate.gov>

Subject: RE: NOAA/EPA Joint Briefing with Sen. Feinstein Staff on Deep Ocean DDT Contamination off the Southern California Coast

Hi Alexis,

The meeting did happen, and it was productive! We'll have a brief summary for you next week. In the meantime of course please feel free to reach out with questions, or if I can be of assistance.

Thanks!

Julia

From: Giarmoleo, Julia

Sent: Friday, June 25, 2021 10:52 AM

To: Segal, Alexis (Feinstein) <Alexis_Segal@feinstein.senate.gov>

Subject: RE: NOAA/EPA Joint Briefing with Sen. Feinstein Staff on Deep Ocean DDT Contamination off the Southern California Coast

Hi Alexis,

I'm working with my colleagues on this and will have a response for you asap.
Thank you!

Julia

From: Segal, Alexis (Feinstein) <Alexis_Segal@feinstein.senate.gov>

Sent: Thursday, June 24, 2021 8:23 AM

To: Giarmoleo, Julia <Giarmoleo.Julia@epa.gov>

Subject: RE: NOAA/EPA Joint Briefing with Sen. Feinstein Staff on Deep Ocean DDT Contamination off the Southern California Coast

Hi Julia – is the meeting referenced below occurring today? If you would please share a read out from the meeting, who attended and decisions/plans etc made, I would really appreciate it.

Thanks,
Alexis

From: Giarmoleo, Julia <Giarmoleo.Julia@epa.gov>

Sent: Monday, June 14, 2021 8:09 PM

To: Segal, Alexis (Feinstein) <Alexis_Segal@feinstein.senate.gov>

Subject: RE: NOAA/EPA Joint Briefing with Sen. Feinstein Staff on Deep Ocean DDT Contamination off the Southern California Coast

Hi Alexis,

The meeting referenced has been rescheduled to June 24 to ensure all key players could attend. I will make sure to keep you updated if anything changes, and of course we'd be happy to have another briefing or share relevant updates via email after the June 24 meeting if that would be helpful.

Please feel free to reach out if you have any questions.

Best,

Julia

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From: Segal, Alexis (Feinstein) <Alexis_Segal@feinstein.senate.gov>

Sent: Monday, June 14, 2021 3:04 PM

To: Gill, Sonam <Gill.Sonam@epa.gov>

Cc: Giarmoleo, Julia <Giarmoleo.Julia@epa.gov>

Subject: RE: NOAA/EPA Joint Briefing with Sen. Feinstein Staff on Deep Ocean DDT Contamination off the Southern California Coast

Hello – thanks again for the Montrose Superfund and PV Shelf briefing last week.

Has the June meeting referenced below occurred or been scheduled? Any information you can share? Senator Feinstein is very eager to know next steps the agencies will be taking on this issue.

Thanks,
Alexis

From: Gill, Sonam <Gill.Sonam@epa.gov>

Sent: Tuesday, June 1, 2021 12:39 PM

To: Segal, Alexis (Feinstein) <Alexis_Segal@feinstein.senate.gov>

Cc: Giarmoleo, Julia <Giarmoleo.Julia@epa.gov>

Subject: RE: NOAA/EPA Joint Briefing with Sen. Feinstein Staff on Deep Ocean DDT Contamination off the Southern California Coast

Hi Alexis,

Please see responses to your questions below.

Thank you,

Sonam

He said that EPA's current view is the dominant source of DDT to the CA bight was from the wastewater treatment plant on the PV shelf and not the deep-sea dumping that we were discussing. I'm wondering how EPA has established that view, especially since simultaneously, a theme of the briefing was how little we know about the effects of the offshore dumping. Was there a study or studies he was relying on? If there's more information, that would be really helpful.

It's important to note that the wastewater treatment plant referenced is the Joint Water Pollution Control Plant located in Torrance. This is a source of contamination for the PV Shelf, an underwater, near-shore segment of the Montrose Superfund Site where contamination from the wastewater treatment plant settled after being discharged via sewer line outfalls. While this discharge may account for the majority of DDT discharged by Montrose to the ocean, as discussed below, Montrose's deep-water disposal, as well as non-point source pollution from historic uses of DDT, also contribute to DDT ocean contamination across the Southern California Bight.

EPA's statement about the wastewater treatment plant being the dominant source of DDT to the ocean is based on a key 1985 Regional Water Quality Control Board report entitled, "Ocean Dumping Under Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board Permit: A Review of Past Practices, Potential Adverse Impacts, and Recommendations for Future Action" which states that "Three-fourths of the DDT found in Southern California coastal waters appears to have originated chiefly from the Joint Water Pollution Control Plant outfall two miles offshore of Whites Point (about 1800 metric tons)." (p.1, Executive Summary).

Provide an update of where things currently stand with the PV shelf clean up?

Since EPA's letter to Senator Feinstein on March 24, EPA has awarded a contract to update the human health and ecological risk assessments for the Shelf. EPA will then evaluate the available cleanup technologies in a Feasibility Study, currently scheduled for 2024, and select a final remedy. EPA continues to implement extensive public outreach and education efforts to minimize human exposure to the most imminent risks presented by DDT contamination on the PV Shelf. This has included educational outreach, fish market inspection programs, and a commercial catch ban – all to prevent and deter consumption of fish contaminated with DDT and PCBs.

EPA has also initiated the second Monitored Natural Recovery (MNR) study to determine the DDT and PCB concentration changes in time in sediment, the water column, and biota. The data collection for this is scheduled to start in December 2021. We are in the process of scheduling a briefing on the Montrose Superfund Site and the PV Shelf with Senator Padilla's office, and would be happy to include your office if you have any further questions, or would like more information on this topic.

We are hearing from EPA they are not the lead agency and are in a support position to NOAA yet hearing the same thing from NOAA. Can you clarify EPA's position? And also let me know the list of agencies who are invited to the early June meeting on this topic that was mentioned in the briefing.

Addressing this issue requires all participating agencies to collaborate and leverage all available resources. Both NOAA and EPA have taken action on the next steps identified by participating agencies; however, because of the respective authorities and roles state and federal agencies may have in this process, a lead cannot be identified until more information is known.

Participating agencies in the three meetings to-date, as well as the next meeting planned for early June, include senior leaders from U.S. EPA, NOAA, the U.S. Department of the Interior, Cal EPA, the California Natural Resources Agency, the California State Water Resources Control Board, the Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board, and the California Department of Toxic Substances Control.

From: Segal, Alexis (Feinstein) <Alexis_Segal@feinstein.senate.gov>

Sent: Thursday, May 27, 2021 8:53 AM

To: Gill, Sonam <Gill.Sonam@epa.gov>

Subject: RE: NOAA/EPA Joint Briefing with Sen. Feinstein Staff on Deep Ocean DDT Contamination off the Southern California Coast

Hi Sonam – Thank you very much again for helping to organize the briefing on Monday. It was really helpful and informative. I had a follow up question for John Lyons based on a statement he made during this week's briefing. He said that EPA's current view is the dominant source of DDT to the CA bite was from the wastewater treatment plant on the PV shelf and not the deep-sea dumping that we were discussing. I'm wondering how EPA has established that view, especially since simultaneously, a theme of the briefing was how little we know about the effects of the offshore dumping. Was there a study or studies he was relying on? If there's more information, that would be really helpful.

Secondly, if someone could provide an update of where things currently stand with the PV shelf clean up, I'd appreciate it.

Lastly, we are hearing from EPA they are not the lead agency and are in a support position to NOAA yet hearing the same thing from NOAA. Can you clarify EPA's position? And also let me know the list of agencies who are invited to the early June meeting on this topic that was mentioned in the briefing. Thanks! Happy to hop on phone if that would be helpful.

From: Gill, Sonam <Gill.Sonam@epa.gov>

Sent: Monday, May 24, 2021 4:52 PM

To: Lazarus, Jim (Feinstein) <Jim_Lazarus@feinstein.senate.gov>; Muller, Peter (Feinstein)

<Peter_Muller@feinstein.senate.gov>; Segal, Alexis (Feinstein) <Alexis_Segal@feinstein.senate.gov>; Christian, Jeanette

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Boehr, Craig (Padilla) <Craig_Boehr@padilla.senate.gov>; Swig, Sarah (Padilla) <Sarah_Swig@padilla.senate.gov>

Cc: Becky Lizama - NOAA Federal <becky.lizama@noaa.gov>

Subject: RE: NOAA/EPA Joint Briefing with Sen. Feinstein Staff on Deep Ocean DDT Contamination off the Southern California Coast

Good afternoon,

Attached is the presentation from our discussion earlier today. If you have any questions please let me know.

Sonam Gill

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